

## Meeting minutes March 10, 2016

Approved April 14 Meeting

### **The Purpose of the Oversight Board is to:**

- *Assist in the development of public education and government access television in the City including by promoting the use of the public studio to citizens and groups throughout the City;*
- *Oversee the cable television public access facility/studio and assist the Public Access Coordinator, whom shall be responsible for the day to day operation of the public access facility/studio;*
- *Review memorandums of understanding between the city and relevant entities to assure implementation of PEG access;*
- *Make recommendations on the success of the programs in Phase I of PEG funding and based upon said findings make recommendations for expenditures of Phase II funding.*

Present: Mark Barth, Joe Bonilla, Tom Brownlie, Mario Chiarello, Joe Cuniff, Marc Gronich, Elizabeth Richards, Chris Sagaas, Cathy Taylor, Ocasio Willson

Absent: Ron Lesko, Albany Community Development Association representative.

Meeting called to order at 6:15 PM with a quorum.

### **Public comment**

Keith Irish:

1. Concerned about posting notice of PEGAOB meetings. One thought is to insert slides between programs on Channel Albany.
2. A new low power FM radio station WCAA in Albany will go on the air in the coming months operated by Grant Street Community Arts.

Nancy Benedict Representing Citizens for Public Transport

- Asks for a public schedule to access the Channel Albany studio to plan programs.

Dennis Karius concurs

- Citizens need more notice when studio is available and would benefit from having student interns.

### **New business**

- February 11, 2016 meeting minutes.

Mario moves for approval, Liz seconds. Minutes approved.

- Chris Saagas presented a summary of PEGAOB Financial Statement dated from April 11, 2011 to December 31, 2015 with a balance of \$216,565.40. The information was provided by Albany City's Deputy Treasurer Ken Bennet.

- Report on new coordinator's first 2 weeks

- Jake Sardos reports a smooth transition. Operations have returned to the level when his predecessor left. The server remains at the New School's former office on Harriman Campus.

The coordinator's report expanded into a lengthy exchange of ideas among Board members due to network issues related to NSRT's move to Colonie. As a result, program content cannot be submitted for transmission, the server is currently filled with content, the website is not up, and the continuity loop cannot be improved.

A wide ranging conversation followed:

Tom Brownlie elaborated with details of the massive move of the NSRT to Colonie

- Time Warner has to connect the server and needs a three-week lead time.
- It involves moving the modulator and the fiber optic connection to the server; and connecting a public access server with Time Warner.
- The PEG Board has to decide what it wants to do.

Mario: the Board could decide to move the server to the Albany Public Library [APL].

Questions: does the library have capacity? Who will maintain it?

APL needs \$70,000 to operate.

A discussion and decision, regarding installing the server, fiber optic link, and modulator, can be scheduled for a future meeting.

Tom expressed disappointment that the education channel did not work out as well as expected. Perhaps it is more viable on YouTube?

The big question: who will create program?

Tom recalled that at one time NSRT reached out to not-for-profits but without much success.

Discussion turned to FTP [file transfer protocol], use of the Internet instead of reliance on disks.

It is all contingent on moving the public server.

Joe C. cites Colonie's reliance on FTP from New Zealand

Discussion turned to the use of interns. Ocasio asked Jake to describe to the Board next month what a studio looks like when operating at full capacity.

- Technology committee's inquiry regarding condition of our equipment

On February 19 the studio was reopened and several members of the PEG Board, plus Tor from the library, arrived to greet Jake.

Liz's report: Three cameras were set up but one was not working. Joe C substituted a fourth camera which did not work and eventually a faulty cable was identified.

Conversation at the meeting turned to a comparison between Sony Vegas and Adobe Premium cameras; then to video editing software, burning and ripping DVDs.

- Open Stage Media [OSM] Proposal for Channel Albany

Members of the Common Council ad hoc committee Dorcey Appelyrs and Mike O'Brien were present and clarified that there is no immediate deadline by which the PEG Board must make a recommendation to the Common Council.

- Mario: we need a better understanding of the concept
- Joe C: it's straightforward. If we do not run our server OSM does.

Zeb: explains what \$10,000 would pay for. OSM will handle:

- programming,
- the website,
- operating the server according to terms in an annual contract separate from Schenectady.

Questions:

Ocasio: what does branding and identity look like?

Zeb: "Albany – Schenectady Channel"

Zeb: We can talk about it. We don't consider it "Schenectady." We stream to the web.

Jake: Identity is silly, it's not China. It's a good opportunity to grow.

Liz asks: would OSM involvement make life easier?

Jake: I can do only so much in 19 hours. If OSM can do the mechanics I can do programming.

Tom: what concerns me is to open the \$10,000 door. Once that equipment moves we won't get it back. Predicts year two will be more than \$10,000

Mario: we need a separate meeting

Tom: what's critical is Schenectady creating content. We can lose money from the Time Warner budget. [Unclear why].

Mario: It's a one-year contract. We can take it back.

Tom: There is a Time Warner modulator at Harriman and a server at NSRT. The server has nothing to do with Channel Albany.

Tom: Switch back after year one? Only if it is easy for Time Warner. [Unclear why].

Mark: what has Tom done as a Board member to ensure programs are developed locally in the community? or to develop volunteer resources?

Tom: Nothing, it is not NSRT'S job.

Mark: It is the topic we are dealing with now.

Ocasio: Can Board members meet with Tom at NSRT to identify a long-term vision if the server equipment is moved there.

Joe C: Can Zeb generate a report on programing allocation amounts, timeslots, etc.?

Zeb: The information is on the OSM website.

Mario: Refer further questions to the PEG Board Technology committee.

- Committee reports

Fundraising Committee: PEG Board cannot form a 501C3. Citing John Riley, an organization can receive money from donors to, for example, "Friends of..."

- Valerie Lubanko clarifies: the City can receive money for PEG but cannot issue an acknowledgment letter to a donor
- Marc: is there a way to thank them?
- Valerie: we cannot ask for that. For the Common Council to accept the donation it must pass a resolution.
- Marc: John Friedman (from The Jewish View) is willing to set up a "friends of public access."
- Valerie: it is unclear who can be on the board of a PEG 501c3

Marc: proposes the Board list its equipment needs.

Additional questions:

Can we get a model of how the city pays for St. Patrick's Day parade? For example Price Chopper makes a contribution

- Dennis Gaffney: the parade committee is an independent organization
- Mike O'Brien: recalls a committee to preserve Washington Park.

Outreach Committee

Ocasio and Mario: outline several steps

- Recommends a comprehensive review of MOAs
  - Each partner provide a status update on the execution of their obligations per the MOAs
    - The board convenes individual meetings with partnership decision-makers - regarding the future of the relationship with goal to
      - improve technological platform; improve reporting of Identify a fiscal agent.
      - develop a training system to operate studio and maximize capacity so we know what we can ask.
- Improve technological platform
  - OSM considerations:
    - Website

- Video on-demand
- Scheduling
- Content
  - Need to ensure equitable sharing of prime time slots
  - Improve video-recording quality of government meetings
  - New audio equipment
- o Identify fiscal agent
  - Reach out to local not-for-profits to identify potential fiscal partnerships
- o Develop training system for volunteers/interns
  - Identify various job roles necessary for operation of studio
  - Articulate skills/learning needs for operation of studio at maximum capacity
  - Identify partners that can help meet our needs

Mario identifies issues to assure Common Council meeting transmissions.

- o Recommends video and audio improvements.
- o Can the school district provide student interns?

Tom:

- Audio equipment is good quality. CC Members have to use the microphones better. Orient members on how to use microphones.
- The video equipment is older. It takes work to install. Is someone there to operate equipment other than a volunteer? You have to spend money and you need someone to run it.

Marc: When will the Albany Community Development Agency name a representative to PEG?

- Updating the PEGAOB website  
<http://www.albanyny.org/Government/CityOfficials/BoardsAndCommissions/PEGAccessOversightBoard.aspx>

Mark:

- When information on website is accurate and up to date it will be of value to the public.
  - o Still listed is the name of the former public access coordinator and studio hours
  - o Information on PEGAOB meeting schedule is not accurate
  - o Meeting minutes appear from January 2013 and stop at June 2014
  - o There is room on the website to post upcoming meeting agendas
- Joe B. recommends PEG Board recording secretary follow up with Sarah Kampf in the Mayor's office.
- Not on agenda: Joseph Cunniff announced he is leaving the PEG Board. Earlier in the day Joe formally submitted his resignation in writing to Richard Conti, effective end of March 2016. Without formal nominations or seconds, the PEG Board named Joe Bonilla Chairperson and Marc Gronich Vice- Chairperson.

**Old business**

- Jake Sardos contract
  - Not discussed. It will be added to April meeting agenda
- Status of PEG Oversight Board's "Ask" for Mayor Sheehan to bring to Time Warner
- Dennis Gaffney: Time Warner was presented a request, initiated by the PEG Board, for additional \$150,000 funds. Time Warner gave no response. The name of the TW official contacted was not specified.
- Means to ensure that a program schedule website is maintained.
  - Joe C: There is no freestanding website to do this; the <http://www.channelalbany.tv> site no longer belongs to us.
- Completion of 2011–2015 Common Council Report: Joe B. and Mark will follow up.
- Assembly member Fahy's grant to hire students to operate cameras
  - Mario called the office and believes that a \$2,500 check was sent to the city.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Next PEGAOB meeting is April 14